

APPENDIX L

BAY MANAGEMENT PILOT PROJECTS: SELECTED FINDINGS

Two community-based organizations were funded for one year to carry out bay management pilot projects. These projects were based in Taunton and Muscongus bays. Based on observation of meetings and interviews with project participants, the following analysis provided the bay management staff team with feedback on engaging communities in nearshore management.

- A. Context: The following observations highlight the unique qualities of nearshore environments and governance that form the context in which the pilot projects were operating and in which we are now looking to create improved governance structures.*
1. Nearshore areas are different, ecologically and socially, than land or open water areas
 - a. Large range of ecosystems from coastal bluffs to tide pools to mudflats to open water
 - b. Less is known about these environments than land, especially the land-water interface
 - c. Broad array of consumptive and non-consumptive users
 - d. Those who most directly rely on health of bay (fishermen) cannot control many of the factors that affect those resources (e.g., coastal development, recreational boat props)
 - e. Public resources – yet appear to some to be private (e.g., leases for moorings, aquaculture, ‘back yard’ syndrome, docks, traditional fishing use)
 2. Nearshore areas have unclear planning or governance responsibilities (to most people)
 - a. No overarching governance structure for nearshore area
 - b. Property owners own to low tide, towns control harbors, clam flats and shoreland zoning, state can issue aquaculture leases and permits, feds can issue permits
 - c. Both a piece-meal approach (no comp plans/public ‘lands’ plan/overarching policy) and a cookie-cutter approach (no allowance for region specific needs)
 - d. Current models for community involvement don’t fit unique qualities of nearshore areas. For example, watershed planning focuses on land use and doesn’t typically engage consumptive resource users. Community-based fisheries management focuses on one subset of water users but doesn’t typically consider other users.
- B. Lessons learned: The pilot projects provide an opportunity to examine the potential role of communities in nearshore governance. These lessons about community involvement are perhaps best viewed as questions to consider as we develop bay management approaches.*
1. Define ‘community’
 - a. Who are we really talking about? When people talk about engaging and empowering local communities, some people mean municipal governments, others think local non-profit groups, others think fishermen’s organizations.
 - b. The pilot projects probably did not represent the ‘community’ as whole - certain voices (especially harvesters and municipal officials) were underrepresented.
 - c. Lesson: Be clear about which topics require involvement by certain groups (i.e. harvesters in fisheries issues, municipalities in water access issues). Target specific groups for increased involvement in pieces that matter to those groups.

2. Define 'involvement'

- a. What does it mean to be involved or engaged? It could be helping to plan, coming to internal meetings, attending a public session, participating in a GIS exercise or answering a survey.
- b. Pilots also struggled with this – they wanted to get more people involved but didn't know what the new people would 'do.'
- c. Lesson: There is likely to be only a core group that does the majority of planning in any given initiative. Yet this group needs to be able to know when and how to reach out to others, whether for 'low involvement' (e.g. surveying concerns) or 'high involvement' (e.g. completing specific projects).

3. Decide who will get authority to do what

- a. Does anyone actually want more authority? People might want more control over what happens in their area but few said they want the responsibility for having authority over managing certain uses. The exception: those interested in community-based fisheries management.
- b. No one group is likely to be able to manage a bay. Some groups are just too small or lack the organizational ability to be able to carry out a bay management effort. Others might not have enough grassroots support.
- c. Lesson: The appropriate role at this time for community groups might be more related to improving coordination at a regional level and carrying out discrete projects such as data collection rather than authority to manage any particular use. However, this would mean that potentially no one would be ensuring that the most important issues in a bay would be dealt with.

4. Not all issues are best served by a regional/bay focus

- a. While almost any issue could be examined and managed at a regional level, both groups found that different issues require different scales. Some things are best dealt with at a town level or state level. Others could benefit from regional cooperation – it's these issues that should be tackled first.

5. Community involvement can, but will not necessarily meet other needs identified during the bay management study such as: encouraging regional thinking, improved government coordination, improved use of science, improving resource management

C. Suggestions for moving forward: In contrast to the many uncertainties regarding how to structure community involvement in nearshore governance, there was a clear message to the State as to what is needed from them in any effort to engage communities in a new initiative.

1. Provide clear guidance and expectations without imposing a strict structure

- a. Both pilots were uncertain about what the state was looking for with these projects. There is a need for the state to be extremely clear about what groups could and could not be responsible for. At the same time do not impose such a strict structure that each area isn't free to address locally relevant issues in a locally relevant manner.

2. Provide scientific data and GIS support at a regional level
 - a. There is not enough ecological or social data at a bay level to manage intelligently. Local groups cannot possibly collect all the needed information. The State must help – they could develop a research plan, compile existing data into one place, encourage bay level organization of data, and conduct research.
 - b. GIS maps were one of the most prized outcomes of the projects and yet took relatively more effort than any other component. Both projects had outside GIS experts help them, which might not be available everywhere. The State should look at ways to support GIS map development as it moves forward with bay management. Regional community GIS centers are one way to do this.
3. Maintain regular communication and coordination with regional initiatives
 - a. Both groups discussed the benefits of having regular communication with the State. People generally find the state bureaucracy difficult to navigate and appreciate having a point person to go to.
 - b. Both groups also talked about the benefit of doing their work as part of a larger state initiative. Create a state policy framework to continue with this.
 - c. Lastly, both groups mentioned their communication with each other as beneficial, even if it was limited. If there was some sort of loose system for inter-regional communication, that could be useful.
4. Clarify the relationship between fisheries management and “bay management”
 - a. Fishermen are the predominant users of the water yet are generally missing from these projects.
 - b. Most project members believe that fisheries must be a part of bay management but don’t know how to do that.
 - c. Those involved in fisheries management strongly believe that it should become more community-based, but that it should be kept separate from bay management until capacity is developed.
 - d. Most people think that, once developed, community-based fisheries management should feed into a broader bay management initiative in some formal manner
 - e. Yet if we allow bay management initiatives to emerge locally, it is not clear how or if fisheries will be included, and if it would follow the above process.
5. Replace the term “bay management”
 - a. People involved in these projects consistently said the term ‘bay management’ triggers negative reactions (or looks of confusion) from most people. We aren’t necessarily ‘managing’ anything and not all areas are bays. Find another term for what we are doing.